

Roy Hattersley

Against both truth and logic

- 1 The trend is well established and beyond dispute. The number of crimes committed in Britain is falling year by year. The prison population is expanding fast and, on average, the length of sentence is increasing. Yet casual newspaper readers and television viewers are encouraged to believe the exact opposite. As a nation, Britain is approaching a condition perilously close to hysteria.
- 2 The media should take the major share of responsibility, but populist politicians must accept part of the blame. Last weekend we heard that John Reid, the home secretary, is considering the merits of introducing “Sarah’s law”, a newspaper stunt that involves the public identification of paedophiles after they have completed their prison sentences. He has, by implication, contradicted a judge for following the sentencing guidelines laid down by one of his Labour predecessors. Nobody doubts that he will allow the prison population to increase beyond the present record level. Ten years ago it was feared that it would rise to more than 50,000. This week it stood at 77,785.
- 3 Dr Reid may regard my criticisms as the bleating of a bleeding-heart libertarian. But my views are shared by hard-headed experts on the criminal justice system who insist, with much supporting evidence, that the populist approach to crime and punishment, far from resulting in a more law-abiding society, only makes things worse. Britain needs a politician with the courage to tell the country to calm down. Otherwise the ghastly competition in who can be toughest on crime and the causes of crime will continue, with profound damage to the fabric of civilised society.
- 4 Some time ago, BBC Radio’s World at One broadcast two discussions on the success of custodial sentences in reducing crime. One contributor argued that the prison population should double. His proposal was unrelated to deterrence or punishment. He simply wanted to keep undesirables out of circulation. That is what Juliet Lyon, director of the Prison Reform Trust, calls using prisons “as social dustbins for petty offenders, the mentally ill and drug addicts”. Forget the denial of civil rights that such a policy involves. Think only about its consequences for the prison system, described by the programme’s second contributor, a former prison governor. Indefinite sentences would, he said, make the prison system unworkable. The men and women on whom they were imposed would have no incentive to cooperate with the authorities or to prepare themselves for rehabilitation.
- 5 The larger the number in jail, the worse the overcrowding and the smaller the prospect of release, the greater the likelihood that it corrupts even further. Difficult though the paradox may be for the hardliners to understand, a continual reduction in crime requires custodial sentences to be used only as a last resort.
- 6 Pandering to the popular demand to “lock them up and throw away the key” requires politicians to deny truth and defy logic. Although the scheme for potential early release is essential to the stability of the prison system, some offenders – out under licence or on parole – are bound to reoffend. Oh, for a home secretary who is prepared to say so. Ministers who are prepared to take the brutal approach to penal policy contribute to the

general brutalisation of society. Oh, for a home secretary who was not so obviously well equipped to occupy that role.

- 7 Dr Reid will, I know, be unimpressed by these arguments. He may, however, be more interested in the political consequences of the implication that crime is out of control. During the next three years, he is unlikely to convince the voting public that he has ended the imaginary crisis, no matter how hard he tries to outbid the Tories. The “law and order” debate will continue to contribute to the government’s unpopularity. It is probably too late to convince the nation that crime is nothing like as widespread as it has been encouraged to believe. So Labour 33.

Guardian Weekly, 2006

Tekst 7 Against both truth and logic

- 1p **26** What does the writer bring up for discussion in paragraph 1?
A The effect of statistics on the public's perception of crime.
B The emotional response of the public to horrendous crime.
C The increase in the attention paid by the media to prison conditions.
D The view that crime is all around and goes largely unpunished.
- 2p **27** Geef voor elk van de volgende beweringen over John Reid aan of deze wel of niet in overeenstemming is met de inhoud van de alinea's 2 en 3.
1 He ignores existing policies for the sake of appearing tough on crime.
2 He leans towards a legally questionable proposal.
3 He turns a deaf ear to those who regard Britain as unsafe.
4 He thinks that Britain's criminal justice system needs radical transformation.
Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door "wel" of "niet".
- 1p **28** What is the main aim of paragraph 3?
A To counter the idea that the writer is soft and out of touch with reality.
B To criticise Dr Reid for misinterpreting the laws on crime and punishment.
C To demonstrate that Dr Reid is unduly afraid of getting a bad press.
D To suggest the framework for a fair and decent criminal justice system.
- 1p **29** What does the writer imply when telling the reader to "Forget ... involves." (paragraph 4)?
A By definition prison is an inhumane institution.
B Civil liberties ought not to be ruthlessly ignored.
C Human rights can in certain cases be rightly suspended.
- 1p **30** With which of the people mentioned in paragraph 4 does the writer agree?
1 "One contributor"
2 Juliet Lyon
3 "the programme's second contributor"
A Only 1.
B Only 2.
C Only 3.
D Only 1 and 2.
E Only 2 and 3.
- 1p **31** What is "the paradox" (paragraph 5)?
A Imprisonment leads to an increase in crime in the end.
B Only severe prison sentences can reduce crime.
C The lower the crime rate, the more criminality will be met with severe punishment.
D The threat of imprisonment does not deter hard criminals.

At the end of paragraph 6 Roy Hattersley states regretfully: "Oh, for a home secretary who was not so obviously well equipped to occupy that role."

- 1p 32 Which of the following does he mean by "that role"?
- The role of someone who
- A is committed to reducing crime by methods other than tougher policies.
 - B makes sure that prisoners are subjected to a tough regime.
 - C takes a tough stance on crime and punishment.
 - D takes proper care of both prisoners and prison workers.
- 1p 33 Which of the following fits the gap at the end of the text?
- A is faced with the daunting task of reforming the prison system
 - B is more interested in remaining in power than in reducing crime
 - C will be damaged by a lie that it has helped to promote
 - D will lose the next elections unless it succeeds in reducing crime

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.